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R E M A R K S

O N

Dr. PRIESTLEY'S LETTERS

T O

Dr. H O R S L E Y.

R. E. M. A. R. S.



DE PRINCEPS

D. H. O. R. A. T. Y.

R E M A R K S

ON

DR. PRIESTLEY'S LETTERS

TO

DR. HORSLEY:

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

BY SAMUEL ROWLES.

The deceived and the deceiver are his.

JOB.

*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one
as thyself.*

JEHOVAH.

L O N D O N :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

In the following Letter, the natural consequences of Dr. Priestley's system are, in some measure, pointed out, for the Reader's consideration. The Author, however, does not mean to insinuate, that Dr. Priestley avows those consequences; but he thinks it rests with the Doctor to prove, that they are not the genuine result of his hypothesis. Every doctrine leads to some consequences or other; and when an opponent points them out, it is not sufficient simply to disavow them, if disagreeable, but he should offer his reasons for that disavowal. Now if such consequences be absurd, or pernicious, and yet cannot be fairly denied, or shewn to be forced and unnatural; they are so many arguments enforcing a rejection of that hypothesis from which they flow.



DEAR SIR,

YOU mention Dr. Priestley on *Matter and Spirit*—on *Necessity*—and *The Corruptions of Christianity*—I have not read them; and therefore can say nothing about them. Very lately I read his Letters to Dr. Horsley; and, as I read, made some minutes. On those minutes the following *Remarks* are grounded; and they are much at your service. The decisions of ecclesiastical history, on the present question, I shall leave where they are.

The Doctor seems desirous of “drawing out the *ablest* men,” to this work; not recollecting, perhaps, that a Gibeonite has his usefulness in sanctuary service, as well as the high priest. I profess myself to be possessed of no more than the widow’s mite; but I cheerfully contribute what I have. I cannot forbear agreeing with the Doctor, most cordially, when he asserts the wisdom and energy of divine Providence in superintending all such enquiries for the *final prevalence of truth*. The first remark I make is

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on

on the following singular position. At least it appeared singular to me.

I. "I maintain that there is no more reason why *a man* should be supposed to have an immaterial principle within him, than that a *dog*, a *plant*, or a *magnet*, should have one; because, in all these cases, there is just the same difficulty in imagining any connection between the visible matter of which they consist, and the invisible powers of which they are possessed." So Dr. P. asserts. (Letters, p. 5.)

This is said with sufficient assurance. But is it true? Has the Doctor any particular evidence, beyond his predecessors, on which to found this assertion? If not, a degree less of the positive would have been as much to his honour. If he has, let him produce it. Real philosophers have ingenuously confessed the imperfection of their ideas of matter, and their superficial acquaintance with its modifications and combinations; and it would have been but the part of a modest man for him to have copied them, unless he has a higher claim to our credit. Has he fully investigated the principle and power of *magnetism*? It has been generally apprehended that a magnet *cannot but* attract iron in certain circumstances of position; and that its motion,

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for that reason, is physically NECESSARY. In order therefore to maintain his assertion, and prove that man has no more soul than a magnet, he must demonstrate that a magnet attracts iron by a voluntary motion, or that a man's bodily motion is not such. I can move my body by a spontaneous volition; and I can cease that motion at pleasure. My motion therefore is voluntary; but is magnetic motion such? It is, I am persuaded, from this hint, more than a presumption, that man is furnished with a principle of motion *naturally* superior to a magnet. Let our philosopher tell us precisely what it is, that we be no longer deceived. Most undoubtedly I shall not dispute the palm with Dr. P. on philosophical acquisitions; but, having a grain of common sense, I am not willing to renounce it without a reason. Matter is, in itself, inert and dead; nor can we be told what combinations, circumstantial positions, or structure, will make it a living substance, or voluntary agent; but my present action of writing proves me to be such an agent; and therefore I conclude I am possessed of something naturally superior to matter. Let the contrary be proved by those who are able, and I will believe it. The Doctor allows the mind is NATURALLY active; (Pref. p. 4.) if matter be not proved to be so likewise, the point is not

gained*. It is true, philosophical enquiries have gone far—many things have been discovered and accounted for, which were once thought impossible. But has philosophy given any new laws to matter? Were they not all in being before philosophers had existence? And are they not yet ignorant of ten thousand times more than they know? “If we apply ourselves to the contemplation and study of a vegetable or animal, we are soon at the end of our tether.” Such is the language of true philosophy and wise philosophers.

Behold, we rise from the state of a magnet to be classed with plants and brutes. Important advance indeed! Pray has Dr. P. given you a clear explanation of the process of *vegetation*?

* Much has been said about *perpetual motion* in mechanics---But it appears to me a mere utopian business. Perpetual motion supposes a perpetual mover---a perpetual mover must be a voluntary agent. The idea therefore is absurd, and will appear so, till matter be proved to possess the power of self-motion, or until such a mechanical combination shall be ascertained as is subject to such an agent. The very famous *Derham* says, (Phil. Theol. p. 370. Note. 3d Edit.) “It is a thing impossible, if not a contradiction.” Experience has confirmed this mortifying remark; nor will succeeding efforts have better success. But our motion is neither physically nor mechanically necessary, being voluntary; and the principle of it perpetually the same in its very nature; and therefore not material, but, properly speaking, immaterial. If I am wrong I will thank the man that sets me right.

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Has he demonstrated the principle of motion in a dog? Ought he not to have done these things, before he had ventured on such assertions? To support his hypothesis we expect to see, in unequivocal language, this subject laid open with the reasoning on which it is founded. Are you told, explicitly, what an *immaterial principle* is? and is it proved to be impossible that such a principle should exist in man? I grant these things cannot be done without a perfect understanding of the subject; but, one would think that nothing less than this would entitle a man to an air of decisive authority in his assertions! If he has not proved that an immaterial principle in man is either absurd or impossible, it is manifest he has drawn his conclusion by far too **HASTILY**: that is, he has not properly examined, or does not clearly understand the premises.

But, "there does not appear any connection between visible matter and an invisible power of action." Suppose that to be the case; is it not much more decent and modest to let the difficulty remain than assert what we cannot prove, or what is attended with dangerous consequences? A humble wise man would wish to do so. Are our contracted capacities the **STANDARD** of divine workmanship? Can nothing exist of which we are not competent judges? The truth is, we are
not

not competent judges of the commonest things with which we have to do. We can perceive no connection between the infinite spirit, whom we call GOD, and the material universe—shall we infer therefore either that he is not a spirit, or that he is not the creator? If any proposition may be demonstrated, I think it is this—‘That spirit *does* act on matter,’ though we know not how. To deny the *truth* of a fact because we cannot see *how* it is a fact, favors so much of the supercilious dogmatist or universal sceptic, and so little of the really ingenuous philosopher; that we commonly, and, perhaps, justly, consider it as a characteristic of ignorance and prejudice, or of self-conceited pedantry.

Common consent, in all ages, has voted man to be a *rational* creature. And this suffrage does not appear to be the result of philosophical enquiry or close reasoning, but it arises from such evidence as is within the reach of the meanest capacity. However, if Dr. P. be right, this universal agreement is of no importance; for, being found fallacious, it amounts to—*nothing**. But, is not man then a rational creature? He cannot be such without reason; and if he be not

* “Reason is nothing but a jumble of senseless atoms”—Or, at most, the effect of such a cause. What! is this the result of materialism? Come and see!

superior,

superior, naturally, to plants and brutes, he cannot be possessed of reason; unless they are allowed to be reasonable creatures as well as he,—It seems that philosophers are furnished with “mental habits”—(Letters, p. 110.) But are these mental habits found in dogs and plants and magnets? If they are, we should be glad to have some proof of it. If they are not—but I forbear.

Let us look at this doctrine, a moment, in the light of *morality* and *religion*. “Men, brutes and plants are equally destitute of an immaterial principle.” Could the Doctor fully establish this assertion, it would exalt him to a level with a certain tribe of creatures. But in order to effect such a design it must be proved—That magnets, plants, and brutes, are subjects of moral government—That they are under a law to love the Lord with all the heart mind and strength—That man is under no more law to do so than they—And that a breach of this law renders them ALL *alike* obnoxious to the divine displeasure. Till these things can be proved, the basis of this system will be essentially defective. How would you smile to see a committee of the nation sit down and with all the gravity and good sense of legislators, form a code of laws for the government and well-being of plants and brutes!

brutes ! But, why smile at the good men ? Are men capable of being governed by, and reaping advantage from good human laws ? And are they as destitute of souls as brutes and plants ? Why, then, should they not be all *equally subject* to the same laws ? To institute laws, with penal sanctions, the design of which must be necessarily defeated, or impossible to be obtained, betrays great weakness and temerity in the institutor : But, on this hypothes, is not this precisely the case with our creator ? The Doctor can give an answer. Is it not vanity, in the extreme, to act on a supposition that does not exist ? Besides on this ground, the fears of the sinner and the joys of the saint are mere imagination ; nor do I see how such feelings can, in fact, be known. The world surely have been dreaming for upwards of five thousand years about a non-entity. The keen remorse of an accusing conscience, and the happy experience of communion with God, have always been considered sufficient evidence to prove that man, some how, is essentially superior to all the lower creation. But now we are told, that magnets, plants, brutes, and men are all alike destitute of an immaterial principle ; and therefore are *equally* capable, or incapable, which you please, of the pains and pleasure supposed. However, Sir, allow me to affirm, that man does experience these feelings ; and the Doctor is to prove the same of
 dogs

dogs and plants if he can. If he cannot, he would do well to inform us *what* is the specific difference between them and men, and for *what end* such difference was made; all being upon his plan, *naturally* and substantially alike. Again; on this supposition, there is neither vice nor virtue, there is neither sin nor holiness on the earth. What cannot be the subjects of a moral law, (and it does not appear that brutes and plants can be so,) cannot be the subjects of praise or blame: And man being on a level with them, he ought to be considered in the same point of light. Free agency, or a capacity of moral action, seems essentially necessary to constitute an action praise or blame worthy. But, are brutes and plants free agents? Are they possessed of this moral capacity? And is man equally destitute of it? The Doctor had need settle these things in a satisfactory manner before his position can be confirmed: And if he cannot favor us in this reasonable proposal, we shall be obliged to withdraw part of that veneration we have paid his assertions, and think ourselves justified in doing so. I have always been accustomed to treat St. Anthony's sermon to the fishes as a legendary tale; the production of enthusiastic superstition: But I have found such instruction by sitting at the feet of Dr. P. that, were the old gentleman present, it is possible I might read my recantation and ask

his pardon : for where, pray, is the marvellous difference between a dog and a fish ? Really, Sir, I see no greater impropriety in addressing a shoal of fishes on the doctrine of providence, than a congregation of men and women (*alias*, dogs, plants, and magnets) on the glorious doctrines of God's everlasting gospel. It is true, the sacred page asserts the necessity and importance of the blessings of the gospel* for our happiness ; and tells us, that blessed is the people who know the joyful sound ; but if the Doctor's assertions be true, the whole is only a sacred farce. And if these blessings be nothing, it would not be impossible to prove that religion is nothing ; and if religion be nothing, there is no God. The connection between the hypothesis before us and this inference, might be traced and established ; for this is built on that : But I wave it, for the present.

Here, Sir, you are presented with, perhaps, an original drawing of your divine master, the Lord Jesus Christ. According to Dr. P. he is a mere man like yourself ; you have no more soul than a brute or a plant, you and Christ are alike. You can possess no more virtue or holiness than a

* Such as Regeneration, Adoption, Pardon, Justification, Sanctification, &c. See Eph. i. 3.

plant or a brute ; you and Christ are alike. The love, obedience, and sufferings of Christ, therefore, are no more than the love, obedience, and sufferings of a brute or a plant. But I forbear. When a conclusion is fairly drawn from the premises, and yet involves absurdity or contradiction, it is manifest that the premises are defective ; and, whether the present be not such a case, you can judge. The *nature* of the life of Christ in heaven must be the same he lived on earth. You are told, he is a mere man like yourself, and that you have no more soul than the things we have repeatedly mentioned ; and therefore the life of Christ in heaven cannot exceed the life of these creatures. Let the *circumstances* of life change as they may, the *nature* of life abides the same. The Doctor may be intentionally a patron of religion and virtue, but it is impossible, in my poor opinion, to promote such an important design by telling us, that magnets, plants, brutes, and men, are substantially alike, without any *natural* difference. The end and means are essentially unsuitable. You may as soon quench fire with oil, or freeze the ocean with the burning sun, as subserve the cause of religion and virtue by denying the immateriality and powers of the soul of man. The Lord may give up a man to such hardness of heart and infidelity as for him to be *past feeling* ; but even this would not prove the point in question. Shift

the scene a moment. Let the Lord make the sinner's conscience feel the energy of but one drop of divine displeasure, and at the same time vail the prospect of pardoning mercy; and I will boldly affirm, that the state of a brute would appear infinitely preferable to his. Nor would all HIS efforts to forget his pain or relieve his mind, be of any more avail than his efforts to create an universe.

II. "If *universal concomitance* be the foundation of all our reasoning concerning causes and effects, the organized brain of man must be deemed to be the proper seat, and immediate cause of his sensation and thinking, as much as the inward structure of a magnet, *whatever that be*, is the cause of its power of attracting iron." (Letters, p. 5.)

At last, the business is brought to this close: That man, though a percipient, conscious, active being, is only matter in motion! But is this doctrine proved? How have I feasted my mind with the manly evidence to the contrary, which I find in one of the greatest philosophers of this country*! If the Disquisitions on matter and spirit, by the Rev. Joseph Priestley, L. L. D. F. R. S.

* Baxter's Enquiry into the Nature of the human Soul. 3 Vol. 8vp.

have not razed the foundation and exposed the fallacy of that great man's reasoning, there is nothing done with effect ; it is still a dreadful and delightful truth that man has an immaterial principle within him, and is therefore essentially superior to all the lower creation. Whatever structure or modification may be given to matter, presupposes the existence of matter ; and therefore the Doctor must prove, to make good his ground, that this said modification or structure changes the nature and essential properties of it ; if he cannot do so, it is but dead matter after all ; as incapable of self motion as before the structure was imparted. And if its nature and essential properties be changed by this modification, it is no longer matter. Here we have brought to light a considerable dilemma, and we cordially request our philosophizing materialists to lend us a hand to escape from its jaws. Thinking, willing, reasoning, reflecting and anticipating, I call motion, self-motion ; if it cannot be proved that the Almighty has vested matter with a self-moving power, that can move in different directions at pleasure, or cease motion in any given direction ; I apprehend, that organization or structure will be of little avail to establish the position before us. If philosophers can prove this, we request them to come forwards and do it, that we may be convinced of our errors ; but if they cannot, we must

must beg their pardon for rudely turning our backs on BARE assertion.

It is a maxim in sound philosophy, 'That the effect cannot rise higher than the cause.' The brain of a man is but a number of material particles however beatifully arranged or organized; and yet, you are told, that "The brain organized is the immediate cause of thinking." Dead inactive matter produces an effect the most active, the most penetrating, the most capacious! Is this sound reasoning? Can matter be capable of self-reflection, surveying the works and ways of God, feeling the stings of guilty fears, and tasting the sweets of pardoning grace? It should seem not. But, according to Dr. P. it can produce an effect which is capable of all this. Does not the effect, then, rise higher than the cause? If the organized brain of man be the immediate cause of thinking, I would beg leave to ask, *WHENCE* arises that amazing difference which appears in mens capacities? Or, is there no difference? *WHENCE* springs that manifest variety of principles and practises in men? Or, are they all specifically the same? These things should be explained a little, and set in some tolerable order, if the Doctor would wish his opinion to be received. I think it is also allowed by philosophers, that the component particles of the human body are in a continual

tinual flux—The brain not excepted—And that the same property cannot be transferred from one substance to another. If the brain therefore be the immediate cause of thinking, and its particles continually flying off, though the same number may be found at any given period; I say, if this be the case, what becomes of personal IDENTITY? How can it be proved that the present Dr. P. the Socinian, was ever Mr. Joseph Priestley the Calvinist? Or, how will either of them be found in the day of judgement? I must look to him for an answer.

III. “ Man is of an uniform composition, wholly mortal; the doctrine of a seperate immaterial soul, capable of sensation and action when the body is in the grave, is a notion borrowed from heathen philosophy, and unknown to the scriptures. A soul capable of being happy or miserable when the body is in the grave, is totally repugnant to the system of revelation, and unknown in the scriptures.” (Pref. p. 7. Letters, p. 6.)

This is making short work with us indeed! Let us dare to examine this assertion. That God COULD NOT form and superadd an immaterial principle to a properly organized mass of matter, is not pretended; and to say he HAS NOT
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done it is more than any, less learned than Dr. P., would openly avow, unless they do it on his authority. And even his authority has not yet been sufficient to sanctify the notion; and, pardon me, if I doubt its final success. It is no dishonour to assert the *possibility* of the Lord's having done it; and, if we consider that he designed man to be the lord of this lower world, and therefore gave him dominion over the inferior creatures, this idea will go so far in the *probability* of it as to afford us a presumptive evidence of the fact. Indeed, we have no alternative but this: That a dog, a plant, a magnet, is as fit for government over the creatures as man. There may be some persons whose prejudices, or whose interests, would prompt them to wish this to be true; but it lies with them to prove that it is so; and, if they can, we invite them to do it.

‘Man is wholly mortal’—Is there nothing in the constitution and make of man that militates against this assertion? Were the Doctor to read with attention, a late publication on this subject*, I flatter myself he would change his mind once

* The Evidence of Reason in Proof of the Immortality of the Soul. 8vo. Cadell, London. If Dr. P. would radically settle and substantiate his material system and the entire mortality of man, he must overturn the arguments advanced in these works of Mr. Baxter; for, while they remain to be read and understood, his scheme must appear, as it is, essentially defective.

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more. I think I need not scruple to assert that, the man who can seriously consult that book and still maintain the mortality of his soul, must be in a deplorable condition indeed. The evidence Mr. BAXTER adduces for the natural Immortality of the Soul is easy, popular, convincing, and yet truly philosophical. At least, it is so, as far as I am able to judge of it.

An immaterial principle in man that will survive the body, is said to be an invention of heathen philosophy. If that be the case, it is the more likely to be true. The arguments must be strong and conclusive, and the evidence convincing indeed, to induce a heathen to receive such a doctrine. Truth must be attended with a peculiar energy to prevail over the torrent of corruption with which it was manifestly opposed—But, it should seem a christian philosopher is at liberty, though favored with additional light on the subject, to reject and oppose it. Eventually, it might be a happiness for some folks, if it were to be found a falsehood. But—I proceed. You are told that, ‘this doctrine is totally repugnant to the system of Revelation’? If so, it is vain to address the fears or the hopes of the sons of men. Eternal damnation and everlasting glory, though found in the Scriptures, on this hypothesis, are mere empty sounds! But, pray, are
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these things nothing but fiction and fable ? If so, I would ask the Doctor " WHO could introduce the use of such language, and WHY ? HOW could the ideas, it is calculated to convey, enter the mind of him who first adopted the dreadful and delightful terms ? Are mankind no more impressed, is it possible they should be no more impressed, with these things than plants or brutes ? If they be not, WHENCE these various efforts to obliterate the painful apprehensions of the future ? And if they really be, WHAT can be the cause ? We look to the Doctor for an answer. In the mean time let us just glance at the evidence of scripture on the subject.

" God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul." (Gen. ii. 7.) Now, according to Dr. P. this description is only designed to tell you, that GOD properly formed Adam's body, gave a regular organization to his brain and put it in motion, and then he became equal, but NOT superior, to a brute, or plant, or magnet. ' Man has a rational, living, immaterial, soul, distinct from his body.' Can any thing less than this be meant by such an account of his creation ? Does not his body appear to be evidently formed and finished before his Creator gave him a soul ? To say that man became a living

living soul MERELY because his brain was duly organized, what an insipid, unmeaning exposition of the great Creator's work ! Is this the language of unprostituted philosophy ! Again ; " God created man in his *own Image and Likeness.*" (Gen. i. 26, 7.) Doubtless there is a display of divine wisdom and power in adjusting the particles which compose the brain, as well as the other parts of the body, and first putting them into motion ; but what has this to do with the image of God ? If this be all, the image of God is as visible in brutes as men ! But, who would assert this ? There is a NATURAL *image* of God in man. God is a Spirit. As such, he is a conscious, active Being, and a free Agent—And all this in absolute perfection. An image, or likeness of this, we have in man. The powers and capacities of man's Soul, his Understanding, Will, Consciousness, &c. afford some pleasing idea of his original constitution ; without the consideration of which, the whole is dark and dull, and void. ' Created Spirits, possessing NATURALLY a power of thinking, are a bright emblem of the blessed God, who is all consciousness and activity. It is the very nature of God to be conscious and active : If he ceases to be conscious and active, he ceases to be. Conscious activity is also the essence of every spirit. A noble rank of beings we are, the living and lively

offspring and image of that intellectual and vital power who gave us being.' (Dr. Watts) The Calvinists are charged with degrading man; but verily they have never yet set him *so low* as our philosophising Socinian. Nor is such an idea of man consistent with their experience, or the word of God. There is also what we call a MORAL *image* of God in man. This, the bible tells us, consists "in knowledge, holiness and righteousness." (Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. x.) In *THIS* man was originally created: And though he lost it by Sin, yet it is restored, by regenerating Grace, to the people of God. Now, it must be proved either that this image is also found in brutes, plants, and magnets, or that this testimony is false; or we must be allowed to assert, that an immaterial principle in man is not unknown in the scriptures. Once more; "The dust shall return to the earth as it was; and the Spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Ecc. xii. 7.) The Creator of the heavens and the earth is said to "form the spirit of man within him." (Zech. xii. 1.) For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii. 11.) According to our Author these passages are totally unintelligible; they are absolutely without a meaning. You will excuse my not enlarging upon them,
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When philosophers have duly considered such evidence, they are welcome to be materialists if they can. Moreover ; the kind Redeemer addresses his apostles, in the prospect of suffering persecution for his sake, in the following very affectionate, striking language. " Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; But rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and Soul in hell." (Matt. x. 28.) A plain unlettered man, furnished with a little common sense, unencumbered with the trappings of science, and not obliged to support a system ; on reading this text would naturally conclude, and truly I think his conclusion would be just, that the Lord Jesus Christ designed, by the terms *body* and *soul* two distinct substances, with distinct capacities ; though both are essential to the compositum of man : But according to our ingenious philosopher they are only two words for the same thing. Should this be allowed, the passage would not only be unmeaning but untrue. The Doctor says, that man is wholly material and mortal, and that when persecution slays the body there is an *end* of the man—The Lord Jesus Christ tells you that persecution may kill the body, but CANNOT kill the soul. I presume therefore to conclude, that man has a principle within him distinct from his body, and that will survive it. The Doctor says that an immaterial soul in man, which is capable

capable of pain or pleasure, when the body is in the grave, is repugnant to revelation. The Lord Jesus Christ, in this text, most clearly asserts the contrary. As both cannot be true, and as the Doctor tells you, 'the matter is of the highest importance;' I shall leave you to choose whom to credit; Dr. P. or Jesus Christ. From this passage we look forward to a future conscious existence for the soul, both before and after the Resurrection. But now I mention the Resurrection, let me drop a word on that subject.

On the hypothesis before us, the Resurrection is neither more nor less than a new arrangement of our material particles, which had been deranged and decomposed by death; so that we only rise again fresh material systems of blood, and bones, and muscles, &c. As far from an immaterial conscious principle within us as before—We are to rise again, at the voice of the trump of God, to enjoy the life of MAGNETS, PLANTS, and DOGS! Is this the Resurrection of the Bible? Is a sinner—Is a saint, when raised from the dead, to be only susceptible of the feelings of a brute! Is this the ULTIMATE object of all the glorious promises of the everlasting Gospel? Is this the LAST END of all the gracious purposes of God to his people? Is this all for which martyrs bled, and for which the adorable Redeemer lived and died?

Believe

Believe it who will ! And, yet, if man have no nobler principle in him than a plant or a brute, THIS must prove his perfect terminus, his *highest* end ! I cannot think it presumptuous to suppose, that the apostle Paul possessed AS MUCH wisdom and learning as Dr. P.—But you find that great champion preaching, suffering, and dying, with his eye and his heart joyfully and stedfastly fixed on the resurrection from the dead. (Phil. iii. 10, 11.) You hear him say, “if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Cor. xv. 19.) But, surely, according to this Gentleman, never was a wretched animal so perfectly fascinated, so absolutely deluded ! And, shocking to think ! deluded too, by the GOD who made him ; by the REDEEMER who loved him and gave himself for him ; by the eternal SPIRIT who sanctified and called him to his labors and sufferings, and fed his hopes with an animating prospect of eternal life ! You hear the Saviour say, “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life : And I will raise him up at the last day.” (John vi. 40.) Raise him up—to what ? enjoy an everlasting life—of what ? plants and brutes !

A SEPARATE state, in the light you behold it, in short, in every light, is a mere figment. You are

are told, "A soul capable of happiness or misery when the body is in the grave, is TOTALLY repugnant to the system of Revelation, and unknown in the Scriptures." If so, you must not expect a syllable about it there; or, if you do, it can only be to deny such a doctrine and expose its fallacy. But let us see if this be fact.

Paul tells his son Timothy, (2 Tim. i. 10.) "That life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel." The LIFE of what? Matter? The IMMORTALITY of what? plants and brutes? Is this the meaning of the inspired writer? Is this the ground on which the persecuted Apostle triumphed in the face of his enemies? Oh! "the opposition of science falsely so called!" The same apostle says, "We are absent from the body and present with the LORD. (2 Cor. v. 8.) WHAT is absent from the body? Is the body absent from *itself*? If there be any meaning in the words, it seems plainly to be this: "Man has an immaterial Soul, capable of consciousness and action when the body is in the grave; and, that when a believer in Christ is called from time, his Soul is present with the Lord; is conscious of and really enjoys the blessedness which flows from his glorious presence." The Sadduces, you remember, were one with the Doctor—They were materialists.

(Acts

(Acts xxiii. 8.) Being excited by curiosity, a desire of instruction, or somewhat else; they applied to Christ for his opinion on the question; and produced, as they thought, a case in point. The Lord Jesus Christ opened the business with telling them, they ERRED through ignorance of the scriptures and the power of God; and then gives his decision. Mark his words. "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by GOD, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the DEAD but of the LIVING." (Matt. xxii. 23—32.) Were candid common sense to judge of this evidence, it would appear sufficient to prove that man has a separate, conscious state of existence, when his body is in the grave; and that therefore he must possess an immaterial soul to be capable of it. You know our Lord said to the thief, when on the cross; "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) What, is paradise only a state of insensibility, inaction, and unconsciousness! A truly gracious promise this, surely, to support the hopes of a dying criminal! A most glorious state, beyond a doubt, to which the mighty and merciful Redeemer was to be reduced! Can a sober unprejudiced mind receive such doctrine! From these passages it is manifest, however, that the doctrine of a separate state is NOT totally
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repugnant to Revelation, nor ENTIRELY unknown in the Scriptures. If the Doctor would oblige you, and maintain his own hypothesis, he must either prove that these passages are no part of Scripture, or reconcile them to his system, or confess he has asserted too much in haste. Reason and Revelation inform us, that God is a good, a just, a holy Being, and that man is a moral agent; and, we think, that vital Religion carries this truth forward to demonstration. But if it can be proved that man is wholly mortal, and that when he dies, he ceases to be a conscious active being; I think it will follow that there is neither religion, revelation, reason nor a just and holy God in being. If it can be made appear that a universal blank may cover the Soul of man for four or five thousand years, will it not be easy to prove that he never was, and that he never will be, a percipient self motive free agent? The Scriptures have frequently asserted, in the most peremptory style, the certainty and solemnity of a future, final judgement. This the Doctor also believes. (Letters, p. 6.) If therefore he would wish us to be his disciples, he will favor us with his best thoughts on the following queries—
WHY should a day of judgement be fixed for **MAN**? Are dogs, and plants, and magnets, the **SUBJECTS** of a future judgement, as well as **man**?

man? If man have no more Soul than they, WHY NOT?

I shall be shorter under the next article because the work has been well done already, in a book lately republished, by my worthy friend, the reverend Mr. BOOTH of London *.

IV. "I am persuaded from the study of the scriptures, that Christ is properly a man—a mere man like ourselves, naturally possessed of no other powers than other men have. God is the Author of his being only *in the same sense* in which he is the Author of being to all men." (Pref. p. 2, 8, 10. Lett. p. 81.) Is it not somewhat peculiar, that we should form ideas so widely different, and that on the same evidence? That Christ is properly a man, we as firmly believe as the Doctor, but we cannot be persuaded to stop there. Having our guide in our hands, we proceed to far higher and nobler views of Jesus the Son of God. In the scriptures it is declared of him, that he is "The SON of God—The Son of the LIVING God—His OWN Son—His only BEGOTTEN Son."

* Dr. Abbadie, *On the Deity of Christ*. Sold by J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-yard. If the Socinians are willing to convince us, that they wish to enter into the business like candid enquirers after truth, let them shew us, on scripture authority, the fallacy of this Author's arguments, and we will believe.

If God be the Father of Christ only *in the same sense* in which he is the Father of all men, this language is nugatory and useless ; in short, it is an insult on our common sense. Will a sober unbiaſſed reader imagine, that the language of heaven is ſo equivocal ? The Doctor ſays, “ The term Father is perfectly correlative to the term Son ;” and, I will add, they take their riſe in NATURE not from office. By office, Chriſt is the Servant, but he is the Son of God by nature. A Son and Servant may very properly meet in the ſame perſon ; and, if it may exiſt among men, it ſhould teach us to be cautious how we charge it with abſurdity in the conduct of Jehovah. Immediately after Saul of Tarsus was converted, he preached Chriſt in the ſynagogues at Damafcus, “ That he is THE SON OF GOD.” (Acts ix. 20.) Can any man ſuppoſe that Paul meant no more, than that Chriſt is a mere man like ourſelves ? No language ſurely, were that the whole of his meaning, can be more effectually calculated to deceive. But let us hear the Savior himſelf on this point. “ No one knows who the Son is, but the Father ; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. As the Father knoweth me, even ſo know I the Father.” (Luke x. 22. John x. 15.) If the Doctor can make theſe declarations comport with the idea of a

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MERE MAN speaking of his Maker, let him favor you with the discovery. If the Lord Jesus Christ be but a man LIKE HIMSELF, he ought to give you the precise meaning of these words; and to tell you why *he himself* dare not adopt them as well as Christ. From this testimony, I apprehend, it is safe to conclude, that the knowledge of the Father and the Son is, strictly speaking, reciprocal, both in nature and degree; i. e. absolutely perfect and comprehensive. Whatever knowledge a being may possess can never exceed his capacity for knowing—a mere man like ourselves cannot have a perfect comprehensive knowledge of God: But the Son's knowledge of the Father is perfectly commensurate to the Father's knowledge of the Son. You can draw the conclusion. "All the Churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." (Rev. ii. 23.) That the Speaker, here, is the glorious Redeemer, will not be disputed; but can Dr. P. or any creature, adopt this language without the boldest arrogance and highest blasphemy? "WHERE two or three are gathered together in my name, THERE am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) Is this the language of a mere man like ourselves? Is it not rather the declaration of the great immense Jehovah? I think our

CIVILIANS inform us, that the validity of evidence does not consist in the number but the competency of the witnesses. Let the Doctor apply that rule in the present case; and you will soon see the result.

The PRE-EXISTENCE of Christ is also denied. (Lett. p. 5, 6, Pref. p. 8.) Indeed, as to his human nature, we see no scripture authority for believing it; but we still think there is sufficient evidence for believing the existence of his divine nature, both before his incarnation and before the creation of the world. When the Author to the Hebrews speaks of his Incarnation he says; "He took not on him the nature of angels, BUT he took on him the seed of Abraham." (Heb. ii. 16.) Now whether you understand by the seed of Abraham, merely a human body, or human nature, that is, body and Soul, which seems the scripture sense, (Gal. iii. 16.) yet, either way, you have a most manifest proof of a pre-existing agent who voluntarily assumed it; and that assuming agent is declared to be, "The Son of God." The same apostle tells you that, By Christ all things were created that are in heaven, and that are in earth—And that he IS BEFORE all things, and that by him all things CONSIST." (Col. i. 16, 17.) This would be an awkward expression, indeed, if he had no existence before he

was

was born of the virgin Mary*. Then the effect would exist before the cause, with a witness. The Lord said to Moses, when he sent him into Egypt, "Go and tell the people, I AM hath sent me unto you." (Exod. iii. 14.) And our Lord, when speaking to the Jews on a certain occasion, says, "BEFORE Abraham was I AM." (John viii. 58.) I would beg leave to ask, here, what is the precise difference, if there be any, between the meaning of, *I am*, in the mouth of Jesus to the Jews, and of Jehovah to Moses? If it meant the eternal existence of the speaker, *a priori*, in THIS passage, why not in THAT? That the Jews understood it so is abundantly evident from their conduct; but, on the supposition before us, they were more childish than their boys at school. That they were sufficiently ignorant and prejudiced cannot be denied; but they were not destitute of common sense: Yet to attempt to stone a person for saying NOTHING, can be little short of madness. But there is somewhat worse than this behind. According to Dr. P. mistaken as they were, there the Son of God left them, with-

* Respecting the miraculous conception of Christ, you may receive or reject it, "without any impeachment of your faith or character as a christian." (Lett. p. 132.) Admirable, indeed! Faith, or no faith, you are the same character! still a christian! If one doctrine of the bible may be thus treated, for the same reason you may treat the whole so---And, yet it seems, be as good a christian when you reject the bible as when you receive it! Christianity, without Christ!

out the least attempt to exculpate himself, or point out their error. The pre-existence of Christ, to a candid unbiaſſed enquirer, in my humble opinion, would be fully eſtabliſhed, by conſidering the following evidence. In his laſt prayer with his diſciples, he ſays to his Father; “Glorify thou me with the Glory I had with thee before the world was.” (John. xvii. 5.) Without ſtaying to inveſtigate the full import of theſe remarkable words, it ſeems very evident that our Lord could mean nothing leſs than a plain declaration of his glorious exiſtence with the Father before the world began. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the firſt and the laſt.” (Rev. xxii. 13. comp. ch. 1: 8, 11. xxi. 6.) And, let me add, (John i. 1.) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” I do not think it raſh to aſſert, that this language can never agree to a creature, in any poſſible ſtate of exiſtence; and yet it belongs to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, it belongs to the true and eternal God. However, theſe few paſſages are ſubmitted to the conſideration of the Doctor, who tells you that, “The pre-exiſtence of Chriſt is a notion that is without foundation both in reaſon and the ſcriptures, and was never taught by the Apoſtles of Chriſt.” (Lett. p. 60.) He further obſerves, that

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“Unitarianism is the doctrine of the scriptures—that, The apostles taught not the divinity of Christ.” (Pref. 8. 10. Lett. p. 60. 1.) But, on the contrary, “They taught the unitarian doctrine.” (Lett. p. 4.) That the unbelieving Jews considered Christ as a mere man, is no wonder; for they were ignorant of the scriptures: But that they continued to do so after they were converted to christianity, wants proof. If the Doctor will direct us to the text of scripture which declares, or implies it, we will readily consider it. This should be done before he expects our credit. That the apostles spake of Christ as a man is not at all strange, for such he was; but to say they never spake of him in a higher character, is also equally destitute of proof; nor can it be reasonably expected that we should receive the assertion without evidence. I suppose it will be allowed that the commission for Baptism makes a part of scripture. (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Does that text confirm the unitarian sentiment? To be quite uniform, a gentleman of this opinion should say, at the administration of that ordinance, NOT, “I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; BUT, ‘I baptize thee in the name of the one true God the Father’ for the other parts stand for nothing. Such, according to our Author, was the desultory, unmeaning language of the Son of God! The great apostle of

the Gentiles trod in his master's steps. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) On the Socinian hypothesis, he only meant to say, The good will of the one true God the Father, be amongst you all.' If this be not trifling with words I must confess I do not know what deserves the name. It is true, Paul says that Christ "is the image of the invisible God." (Col. i. 15.) What then? Does this prove that the Son is essentially inferior to the Father? Is not a Son the image of his Father in every natural perfection? Hence the Savior says, "ALL things that the Father hath are MINE." (John xvi. 15.) If the Socinians can prove that there is a NATURAL INFERIORITY in the Son to the Father as a Son, let them do it; but if not, it will remain still a truth that though the Redeemer, in his divine nature, be the image of God, and so personally distinct from the Father; yet they are truly and properly one in every divine perfection. The nature of the Deity is invisible; but the Son being in the bosom of the Father, (John i. 18.) perfectly knows and has revealed him to us. That is the Son, by his incarnation, has graciously displayed his glorious perfections and counsels to the sons of men. Did not the Lord Jesus Christ SO call God his Father, and SO assert his UNITY with him, (John v. 18.

x. 30) as that the Jews most evidently understood to claim EQUALITY with God? Affuredly he did. And when they received that idea and acted upon it, did he take any step to inform them that they misunderstood him? Not the least. So far was he then from being that very good man the Socinians would have us suppose him, that on their principles, it is impossible to acquit him from the charge of imposture.

We are favored with a criticism on the Greek pronoun which is used of the *Logos*, or word, in John's gospel. (Ch. i. 1.) This pronoun, it seems, is applied to THINGS as well as PERSONS; and therefore the WORD, or *Logos*, is not a person, but a property or attribute of the Father, or the reason of God. (Lett. p. 7; 8. 66, 7. 72. 161, 2.) Must this said pronoun, because it is sometimes applied to things, be never demonstrative of a person? If in any place it may be personal, why not here? And, if not here, why in any other passage? We expect a reason. Suppose, for a moment, we allow the remark—Let us see the event. “In the beginning was the PROPERTY of God, and the ATTRIBUTE of God was with God, and the reason of God was God. This attribute came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received this property of God, to them he gave power to be-

come the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John i. 1, 11, 12.) Is this sense of these passages worthy an inspired writer? Can it meet the sober reason of Dr. P. or the common sense of any man? Was it ever known that a property or attribute became incarnate? But the Logos did—(John i. 14.) Is a divine attribute or property ever called the Son of God? But the Logos is. (John i. 18. 1 John iii. 8.) Let us substitute these terms and see how they will read. "Not that any one hath seen the Father, save he who is of God; this PROPERTY hath seen the Father." (John vi. 46.) This ATTRIBUTE brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt—This REASON of God, is that Moses, who said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This PROPERTY is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel who spake to him in the mount Sinai,

• You are to recollect, that our Doctor objects to the inspiration of the New Testament WRITERS; they are simply HISTORIANS. (Lett. p. 132.) For the same reason he might object to the Old Testament writers; and, then farewell, the Bible. How the BOOK can be received as divinely inspired, while the inspiration of the WRITERS of it is denied, I must leave with the learned to answer. But still, as long as I consider him an honest man, I am obliged to believe his reception of the bible as the word of God; because I have HEARD him openly avow his doing so: And I am not disposed to question his INTEGRITY.

and

and with our Fathers—(Acts vii. 36; 7, 8.) Opening and alledging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this **ATTRIBUTE**, this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ—(xvii. 3.) God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that this **PROPERTY** is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, &c. (ver. 24.) We are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This **ATTRIBUTE** is the true God and eternal life.” (John v. 20.) Let this suffice. Criticism is truly valuable when it throws light upon an obscure passage, or helps to understand an ambiguous sentence in an author; but when it renders plain language equivocal and uncertain it is as truly despicable. I have applied the present piece of critical knowledge in these few cases out of many, that you may judge of its worth for yourself.

When you address **RELIGIOUS WORSHIP** to the Lord Jesus Christ, you are told that such conduct is destitute both of precept and example. (Leit. p. 4, 5.) Suppose we read Heb. i. 6.—“When he bringeth in the first begotten into the world he says, And let all the Angels of God worship him.” It must be proved that religious worship is not here designed, or that the first begotten does not mean the Lord Jesus Christ; or Dr. P. will appear

appear to be mistaken. "All men are COMMANDED to honor the Son even as they honor the Father"—(John v. 23.) The honor to be given to Father and Son being equal, is an evidence of the sameness of nature; and if religious worship be not here enjoined to be rendered to the Son, no more is it to the Father, and *vice versa*. A division in the DEGREE, destroys the NATURE of truly religious worship. If it be not supreme, it is none at all. AS TO EXAMPLES of worshipping the Savior they abound. I shall cite but few. "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. i. 7.) See also, Rev. i. 5, 6. "To him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Either prayer and praise are not acts of religious worship; or, being equally addressed to the Son as to the Father, they prove the essential equality of both. You hear that "the Father ALONE is to be considered as GOD, and the sole object of worship EXCLUSIVELY of the Son or of the Spirit. (Lett, p. 108.) Whether the Father be exclusively the object of worship we have just observed; and that he is as exclusively GOD, is as void of truth. I readily own, that sometimes the term God is used of the Father distinctly—again it is the
name

name of a NATURE—then it is used of the holy *Spirit*—and of the Son. With a view to the last I shall mention a text or two. The language of Thomas the Apostle to his risen Master (John xx. 28.) was either an act of piety, or of impiety. If it was merely an exclamation of surprize, arising from a conviction of the reality of Christ's resurrection, it appears to be an act of impiety, because it was taking the name of God in vain. And shall such an act pass unreproved by the Lord? It was so far from being reproved, that it was acceptable; and therefore ought to be considered by us as expressive both of his lively faith and joyful confidence in a risen Jesus, as the LORD HIS GOD. Paul's assertion also, (Rom. ix. 5.) maugre all the twisting efforts of critics, stands an invincible evidence both of the proper Deity and real humanity of the Son of God. "Whose are the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; who is over all, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. Amen." A declaration not the less clear because it is concise. "But unto the Son," the Father saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." (Heb. i. 8.) Those who are disposed may try their skill with this passage and see what sense they can make it speak, when the Deity of Christ is out of the question. If the term GOD be descriptive of true
Divinity

Divinity in the Father, and will prove him to be an object of religious worship; from the texts justified we should conclude the same of the Son, were there no other evidence of it in all the bible. The repeated and multiform* efforts of Devils and Men to exclude from our Creed the true and proper Deity of Jesus the Son of God is, to me, more than a presumptive argument in its favor; and, ever will be so, until it can be proved, that it is the real design and ardent desire of, both to establish the knowledge and worship and enjoyment of God on this true and real ground; and to purify mankind from all the spots of sin. Truth is one, and its tendency is for ever the same; but Error, like a crouching sycophant, becomes obsequious to every purpose its abettors please.

V. Various have been the devices of men respecting Redemption, as well as the Redeemer; but equally vain and foolish. On this subject it is queried, "Whatever may be meant by the REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD, is not the being who made it equal to it?" Yes; he is, and he ONLY

* Though the opposers of the Deity of Christ widely vary in the manner of their attack, yet they all agree in the main design. Had it been an error, surely it must have been expelled from the christian church long before now. Had it not been an impregnable fortress, it must have surrendered to the united attempts of stratagem and storm--- But even its outworks are as firm as ever.

" If

“If his creatures offend him, and by repentance and reformation become the proper objects of his forgiveness”—This they cannot be, by reformation and repentance; for, if they could, that would supersede Redemption†; but, suppose they could, “Is it not more natural to suppose that he has WITHIN HIMSELF, a power of forgiving them, and of restoring them to his favor, without the strange expedient of another person, fully equal to himself, condescending to animate a human body, and dying for us?” It may be MORE NATURAL in the esteem of a fallen creature; but it would appear to be highly UNNATURAL had we right conceptions of the Law and Justice of God. It is added, “We never think of any similar expedient in order to forgive, with the greatest propriety and effect, offences committed by our children against us.” (Lett. p. 86) We do not act such a part towards our children, and therefore it is *unnatural* for the great Governor of the world to do so towards his creatures*. Our conduct being a sure, an equi-

† It would be as worthy of God to suppose that he could forgive his offending creatures WITHOUT the consideration of repentance and reformation as WITH it.

* Are children DEPENDENT on their Parents for being and blessedness? Are they, as moral agents, eventually AMENABLE at the bar of their Parents with a view to everlasting misery or glory? If not, the comparison is impertinent; and the present application of it is fallacious and delusive.

table, an all-sufficient rule for him ! Such, it seems, is the Redemption of PHILOSOPHY ! Let us compare it with the bible. The volume of inspiration most clearly and expressly informs us, that "Christ hath once, in the end of the world appeared, to put away sin, by THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF—(Heb. ix. 26.) That he GAVE HIMSELF for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works—(Tit. ii. 14.) That in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"—(Eph. i. 7.) But Dr. P. says it is more natural for us to be forgiven on the ground of OUR repentance and reformation. The Lord Jesus Christ very openly declares, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me." (John xiv. 6.) But philosophy, in her superior wisdom asserts, 'We can come to the Father by our reformation and repentance.' The faithful and true witness testifies, in the most unequivocal language, respecting himself as the savior of sinners; "No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him. Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me." (John vi. 44, 5.) But our Author supercedes this also by telling us, that our repentance and reformation are effectual for all the purposes.

purposes of forgiveness and redemption. It would be well for the world if Dr. P. were the only man who substituted the repentance and obedience of a sinner in the room of the person, blood, and righteousness of the Son of God, for salvation. But, alas! it is a prevailing evil!

The **MAGNITUDE** of sin is to be estimated, not from the offender; but the infinite Majesty of the offended. The **NATURE** of it is ascertained, not from the relation of a parent to his child; but from the glory of the Lawgiver, the rectitude of his law, and the dependent state of the creature. The **DESERT** of sin is only to be found in the sanctions of the Law whose authority is insulted by it. A moment's reflection will shew us therefore, that while God is infinite in glory and Majesty, while his Law is righteous and his Justice the guardian of his throne, nothing less than *death*, in the sense of scripture, can be the wages of sin; and therefore the sinner can, **BY NO MEANS** save himself. A culprit under sentence of death might as well flatter himself that the Law he has violated will be honored and satisfied while he lives and despises the Lawgiver, as for the Doctor to suppose that **HIS** repentance and reformation, on sin committed, will recommend him to the favor of a holy and righteous God. Because

(1) Reformation, obedience, or good works (use which expression you please) is the fruit of faith and repentance ; seeing faith and repentance are the gifts and graces of the Spirit through the Lord Jesus Christ. They are tokens of covenant Love ; and, as such, are parts and blessings of the eternal Redemption already obtained, for his people, by the Son of God. And every one knows that blessings of grace cannot be MERITORIOUS works. Because, (2) Our works are not PERFECT ; and the Law denounces a curse on every failure whatever. (Gal. iii. 10. James ii. 10.) Because (3) Supposing them to be so in future, they are no SATISFACTION for past offences. Hence the scripture declares that, “ without shedding of blood there is no remission—That “ Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth—And, that he DIED for our offences and rose again for our Justification.” (Heb. ix. 22. Rom. x. 4. iv. 24. 5.) And, because (4) The supposition is contrary to the express testimony of God in his word. “ By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : It is the gift of God : Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Rom. iii. 20. Eph. ii. 8, 9.) God has, as the Doctor very justly observes, WITHIN HIMSELF, the power of forgiveness ;

ness; and therefore the sacred records assure us that the blessing is bestowed through the blood of Christ. He has also, within himself, the truest ideas of the magnitude and desert of sin, of his own infinite Nature and righteous Government; from himself therefore must proceed the way, the only safe and honorable way, of maintaining his own character and saving his chosen people. Of all these important truths he hath sufficiently informed us in the book of his revealed will. "In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of Sons. (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. v. 19.) In all these displays of sovereign grace you have a most stupendous manifestation of the divine wisdom and prudence. (Eph. i. 8.) In every work of God he chooses, of all possible means, the properest and best to compass the end before him. All his designs discover his unbounded and never failing wisdom in adjusting the means to the end; but, in nothing more, than the redemption of his church, by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of his nature and love.

"Here,

"Here, in thy Gospel's wond'rous frame,

Fresh WISDOM we pursue ;

A thousand Angels learn thy Name,

Beyond whate'er they knew.

Thy Name is writ in fairest lines,

Thy Wonders here we trace :

WISDOM through all the Mystery shines,

And shines in JESUS' Face.

The Law its best Obedience owes

To our incarnate GOD !

And thy revenging Justice shows

Its Honors in his Blood."

WATTS.

Should the Doctor be determined to abide by his present creed, he will be so friendly as to point out the errors of ours ; and, in order effectually to do so, he has to prove, either that the passages before quoted are not the word of God—or that we have mistaken their sense and falsely applied them—or that it is a greater mark of wisdom and glory in the supreme Governor of the world, to pass by sin and make sinners happy let them live as they list ; than it is for him to guard his own rights and character by avenging, in any form, the insults offered him by rebelling creatures. Should you be told that the language of these texts is only figurative and to be taken

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in a qualified, not a true, real and proper sense; you may inform the Doctor if you please, that we are ready to meet on that ground also, and to accompany him through the subject; because we are prepared to prove that, on his hypothesis, there can be no rule of moral action—consequently no sin, or offence against God.

VI. After such an account of redemption, you will not be surprised at the following question. “Whatever you suppose to be the use of a THIRD PERSON in the Trinity, is not the influence of the first person sufficient for that also?” (Lett. p. 86.) We answer, NO—for, had that been the case, the scriptures would have been silent respecting the third person and his sacred Operations. But, must the third person in the blessed Trinity be useless in the work of salvation, because Dr. P. thinks he is! Rather let us turn to the word of God, and there we shall find instruction. On reading my bible I find a person sent by the Father and the Son, (John xiv. 26.-xv. 26-xvi. 7.) not only to empower the apostles to work miracles, but to be IN and ABIDE WITH his church for ever. This person we call the third person in the Trinity; for, it is manifest he is neither the Father, nor the Son, but personally distinct from each. The USE of this person, to adopt the doctor’s term, in the
WORLD,

WORLD is, "To convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement to come. (John xvi. 8.) May Dr. P. be interested in this important blessing! It is by his omnipotent energy that dead sinners are quickened; i. e. regenerated and born again. Hence they are said to be "born of the SPIRIT," (John iii. 6.) to testify his personality; and "born of God," (John iii. 9.) to attest his almighty efficiency: And therefore he is called "The spirit of LIFE in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 5.) It is by his sacred influence and operation that the renewed soul is SANCTIFIED for the grand purposes of grace in time and final glory in eternity. (Compare 1 Thess. v. 23. 2 Thess. ii. 13. 1 Peter i. 2.) His USE in the christian church is, on the same authority, "To COMFORT his people—to LEAD them into all truth—to SHEW them the things of Christ—to HELP their infirmities in prayer—to WITNESS their adoption into the family of heaven—to SEAL them to the day of redemption—in a word, to be an EARNEST of their inheritance, till the redemption of the purchased Possession, to the praise of his glory." It matters nothing to deny these glorious truths, unless they can be refuted: And, if they can, let it be done. I have once used the term VITAL Religion, as you will recollect; and, what I mean by it, I have now said; for it is this, and

ONLY

ONLY this, that will eventually appear to be religion indeed.

VII. There is an objection also to the admission of "INEXPLICABLE MYSTERIES." (Lett. p. 88.) The doctrine of the Trinity being considered of that number we are wished to expunge it. On this part of the subject I shall only wish you to read, for the present, the following texts. "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them, in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST. (Matt. xxviii. 19.) The grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love GOD, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST be with you all. Amen." (2 Cor. ult.) Here it must be proved that BAPTISM and PRAYER are not acts of religious worship; or, I think it will follow, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, though personally distinct, are nevertheless the one true GOD. I suppose it will be allowed that MORAL evil is in the world. Permit me to enquire; Is that subject completely understood by any man? Is not the introduction of sin an inexplicable mystery?

Were the Doctor less acquainted with experimental Philosophy we might be tempted, in candor, to impute his objection to mysteries, to his ignorance. But what shall we say now? Has he a perfect idea of matter? Can he fully explain

the doctrines of ADHESION, ATTRACTION, and GRAVITATION? Has he explored the depth of matter in MOTION? Is there nothing hid from him? Nothing that surpasses his comprehensive faculty? He will not say it.—In this question two things may be safely allowed you: That the Cause is superior to and more perfect than its Effect; and, that the Effect has unfathomable depths for the highest attainments of Philosophy. Those who refuse to grant you these things must wish to make you believe one of these positions: Either (1) That they have *infinite* knowledge, and therefore nothing exceeds their capacity of understanding; or (2) That they have NOT infinite understanding, and therefore there is no infinite knowledge. But, how ridiculous are these pretensions in a creature, who does not understand how the smallest blade of grass springs up and goes on to its maturity! Does this mighty man apply the power, or is it his knowledge, by which VEGETATION is effected! An argument from the less to the greater, when properly applied, is always considered substantial and invincible. Let such as choose it apply the present. There must, of necessity, be inexplicable mysteries, till creatures have infinite understandings; and the man who expels them from his creed, must have no creed at all; he must be, in effect, a downright ATHEIST. And then he will be involved in more impenetrable darkness

darkness than before. Natural as well as revealed Religion must be a stranger to that breast. Infinite understanding necessarily implies an infinite Nature; and it is no greater mystery for that nature to comprize the persons of Father, Son, and Spirit, than the person of the Father only; because, PERSONAL distinction does not suppose, much less prove, a NATURAL difference; and because real mystery admits of no degrees. Arguments of this kind, that will disprove the being of the Trinity, will also disprove the being of God, or an infinite Nature; because neither the one nor the other was ever addressed to our UNDERSTANDING for investigation and comprehension, but to our FAITH for cordial reception and reverend regard. It is a question of fact and not of experiment. The same works, perfections, and worship, necessarily infer and prove the same nature; and these have been shewn again and again to belong, and are EQUALLY ascribed, to Father, Son, and Spirit, as you may read and understand; and therefore you will excuse my not going over that part of the subject now. Where the evidence is one there can be no reason for dividing our assent. When, by the application of mathematical rules, (these rules not our own invention) we are enabled to account for some FEW of the laws of matter and motion, we are prone presently to rise into the capacity of Dictators and Judges; and, from the Chair of Authority, with

a decisive tone, assert, "There cannot be any thing ABOVE what WE understand."—It is the part of wise and modest Philosophers to disabuse mankind of their prejudices and pre-conceived opinions in matters of science; but for them to sit in Judgement on their Maker is "A folly more unpardonable than that of a boy, who should think it impossible for a Locke, a Newton, a Priestley, to know more than he? Such gentlemen treat the Almighty as though he were such an one as themselves; and even suppose that to be the case, then they could not comprehend him, there must be inexplicable mystery. But untill they can do so, it becomes them ~~to be~~ cautious what they assert concerning him, lest he should reprove their rashness and avenge their folly. Should he proceed to this, and no deliverer nigh, they will soon, but too late, be convinced of their delusive ignorance, their affected impotence, and their awful wretchedness. Because Peter, James and John are not mathematically one and yet three at the same time; therefore the three persons of Father, Son, and Spirit are not one but three gods! A mind uncankered with self-important pride, and unaffected with stubborn prejudice, would blush to call this a conclusive argument; and, yet, such is the reasoning of abused Philosophy. Every boy knows, who has employed his reasoning powers a little, that any two or more sets

sets of premises must naturally and universally agree in order to establish precisely the same conclusion. But, is such the case before us? you can judge. An absurdity, a contradiction, we may discover and expose, because the matter is before us; but a mystery is beyond our reach, and we can say nothing to it without the impeachment of our common sense. 'It is a mystery'—and there ends our knowledge. The man who decides on a question he does not understand, is brother to him who answers a matter before he knows it. The all-important reason offered for rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity is this—"It has always confounded the BEST reason of mankind.*" So that because REASON cannot comprehend

* It gives offence to JEWS, MAHOMETANS and UNBELIEVERS in general. This reminds me of Dr. Young's remark which I will here transcribe, and beg you to excuse the length of it.—"Here let me observe, what, perhaps, has escaped your notice, with regard to the blessed Trinity, which gives our UNBELIEVERS the greatest offence. The revelation of it is not only necessary for our understanding the FOUNDATION of christianity, but is also, I conceive, an absolute DEMONSTRATION of its truth. Because it is a mystery which by nature could not possibly have entered into the imagination of man; which they, who most explode it, CONFESS, by their obstinate rejection of it. For why do they reject it, but on that very account? Our opponents therefore, in some measure, support us in our attachment to this supreme article of our creed, which they most condemn; and (what is somewhat remarkable in favor of our faith,) support us in it, by the very cause for which it is condemned by them. In truth none can swallow the mysterious articles of our faith, but those who think it no dishonor to their understandings to credit their Creator. Mysteries are those great and hidden things of our Religion, whose TRUTH we are assured of by divine Revelation, but the MANNER of their being surpasses our Understandings:

hend it, therefore it is not a truth ! An invincible argument truly ! A man not naturally superior to plants, or brutes, mere matter in motion, makes himself the standard of the great first Cause of all things, and determines accordingly ! Such argumentation, if it deserve the name, gives a force to the following text of scripture, which, perhaps nothing else could produce. "BEWARE lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. ii. 8.) If this be not false philosophy, or philosophy falsely applied, I am yet to learn what is ? Is this the END for which the eternal God furnished man with reason ? for REASON in return to rise up and decide on its Author and teach him knowledge ! Is this the end the great Creator designed in giving man ability and opportunity for obtaining some PARTIAL knowledge of his

standings : Such as the plurality of persons in the divine Unity : God manifest in the flesh : The operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers : The spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist : The uniting our scattered parts from the dust of death : All which the scriptures have declared as catholic truths. The more seemingly incredible the matter is which we believe, the more respect we shew to the relator. SOCINUS, out of generous compassion to the scriptures, (which the world, it seems, had misunderstood for 1500 years,) was for weeding them of their mysteries ; and rendering them, in the plenitude of his INFALLIBLE REASON, undigustful, and palatable to all the rational part of mankind. Why should honest JEWS and TURKS be frighted from us by the Trinity ? He was for making Religion familiar, and inoffensive. And so he did, and unchristian too."

CENTAUR NOT FABULOUS.

LETTER, I.

works !

works ! If philosophers choose to think so, they must ; and while they are feasting themselves with their SELF-created importance, I shall turn aside to read my bible. " Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ? For after that in the wisdom of God, THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNEW NOT GOD, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. The NATURAL man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness to him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto THEM it is not given. I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the WISE and PRUDENT, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

In one place, the good Doctor seems candid enough to EXCUSE those who are now what he was once ; but in another, they neither study the scriptures for themselves, nor are they christians. So it seems we have no alternative, but to be idle drones and strangers to christianity, or become followers of Dr. P. ! Were I near his honor, I would whisper in the ear of our venerable Judge, and hope no offence—' That we HAVE the scriptures—That we do study them for OUR-

SELVES

SELVES—and that is the very, perhaps, ONLY reason, why you are not favored with us in your train. But, all the rest apart—If it be but a SUPPOSEABLE case that he may be mistaken, and he has not yet demonstrated the contrary; I say, if it be POSSIBLE for him to err in his present hypothesis, the magnitude of such an error who can tell? A man who has changed and changed like Dr. P. has made it MORE THAN POSSIBLE that he may not be yet RIGHT; and so gives, at least, some presumptive reason to apprehend he may be WRONG: And, if wrong, what has not the Doctor—what have not his VINDICATORS and DISCIPLES to apprehend, in the final audit of the world! Were I admitted to their presence, I would affectionately solicit their serious attention to Ps. 2. ult. “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

But I have done. I can say nothing NEW on this subject. Your proposal rendered it right for me to say what I have. It may serve to refresh your memory and bring to mind some brighter and better thoughts. The Lord use it for his Glory. Amen.

I am, dear Sir, your's,

CHARD,
May 1, 1784.

S. ROWLES.